

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-17. (Canceled)

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

forming an insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a conductive film on the insulating film;

forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film over the semiconductor substrate, the insulating film, and the conductive film;

forming a boron-doped phosphorus silicate glass (BPSG) film after the nitrogen-containing oxide film; and

carrying out a heat treatment on the BPSG film in an oxidizing atmosphere.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 18, wherein ~~the step of~~ forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes ~~the step of~~ carrying out a heat treatment in a dinitrogen monoxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) gas.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 18, wherein ~~the step of~~ forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes ~~the steps of~~:

forming a thermal oxide film on exposed surfaces of the semiconductor substrate and conductive film; and

heat-treating the thermal oxide film in a dinitrogen monoxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) gas or a nitric monoxide (NO) gas.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 18, wherein ~~the step of~~ forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes ~~the steps of~~:

forming a silicon oxide film on exposed surfaces of the semiconductor substrate, insulating film, and conductive film; and

heat-treating the silicon oxide film in a dinitrogen monoxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) gas or a nitric monoxide (NO) gas.

Claim 22 (Original): The method of claim 18, wherein the oxidizing atmosphere contains water vapor.

Claim 23 (New): A semiconductor device manufactured by the method of Claim 18.

Claim 24 (New): A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising forming an insulating film on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a conductive film on the insulating film;

forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film in the absence of hydrogen over the semiconductor substrate, the insulating film, and the conductive film;

forming a boron-doped phosphorus silicate glass (BPSG) film after the nitrogen-containing oxide film; and

carrying out a heat treatment on the BPSG film in an oxidizing atmosphere.

Claim 25 (New): The method of claim 24, wherein forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes carrying out a heat treatment in a dinitrogen monoxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) gas.

Claim 26 (New): The method of claim 24, wherein forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes:

forming a thermal oxide film on exposed surfaces of the semiconductor substrate and conductive film; and

heat-treating the thermal oxide film in a dinitrogen monoxide ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ) gas or a nitric monoxide (NO) gas.

Claim 27 (New): The method of claim 24, wherein forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film includes:

forming a silicon oxide film on exposed surfaces of the semiconductor substrate, insulating film, and conductive film; and

heat-treating the silicon oxide film in a dinitrogen monoxide ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ) gas or a nitric monoxide (NO) gas.

Claim 28 (New): The method of claim 24, wherein the oxidizing atmosphere contains water vapor.

Claim 29 (New): A semiconductor device manufactured by the method of Claim 24.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 18-29 are active in the present application. Original Claims 18-21 have been amended for matters of form and for clarity. The amendment to Claims 18-21 is not intended to further limit the originally claimed subject matter. Claims 1-17 have been canceled. Claims 23-29 are new claims. Support for new Claims 23 and 29 is found throughout the specification and in original Claims 1-17. New independent Claim 24 is drawn to a method of manufacturing a semiconductor device that includes a step for forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film in the absence of hydrogen. Support for new independent Claim 24 is found in original Claim 18 and in the specification, for example, page 3, lines 9-13; page 5, lines 5-7; page 10, line 36 through page 11, line 1; and page 9, lines 5-8. No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment.